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INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Costa Rica

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

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SUBJECT Political Attitudes of President Figueres

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- Figueres appears to be a popular president. The people seem to have confidence in him. He is a practical man, not given to dreaming or Utopian ideals about the problems and future of Costa Rica. He was educated in the US and has a down-to-earth realization of US-Costa Rica relationships. There is no doubt that he respects the opinion of the US in Latin American affairs.
- [REDACTED] the negotiations between his government and the United Fruit Company. He has made a success himself of farming and realizes the practical problems involved. There was some talk of the government controlling the growing of bananas and leaving the distribution and marketing to the United Fruit Company. [REDACTED] He probably will endeavor to make an arrangement with the United Fruit Company along lines similar to the Venezuela arrangements with the oil companies. Figueres stated that if the 1953 world coffee prices held for five more years [through the end of 1958], Costa Rica would be in a secure economic condition.
- Figueres is an anti-Communist, and believes the Communist Party is not very influential in Costa Rica. However, in his relations with other Central American governments he is more concerned with Communist Guatemala than he is with the neighboring states of Nicaragua and Panama. The Communists have had very little success in the Costa Rican labor movement. The most influential labor party, the Rerum Novarum, is dominated by the Catholic Church. One of the most influential and ardent workers in the social reform and labor movement is [Núñez] a priest. The Rerum Novarum rally (November 1953) at which Figueres spoke, was attended by representatives from the AFL, CIO, and the ORIT [Organización Regional Interamericano de Trabajo]. The Mexican left wing labor union CTAL [Confederación de Trabajadores de la América Latina] was not invited to send a representative.

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4. One idea Figueres had concerning closer cooperation among the Central American nations was that of a coordinated university program in which there would be an elimination of duplicate courses amongst the various Central American nations. His idea is based upon the grounds that none of these nations have enough student population and wealth to support a university which could offer a full university curriculum. He therefore would like to see each nation sponsor a part of the general curriculum in its university and eliminate duplicate courses. Under this plan the medical school would be located at one university, the agricultural school at another, etc.

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